

## Aquatic Microbial Community Management (I002086)

**Course size** *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

**Credits 3.0**

**Study time 75 h**

**Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2025-2026**

A (semester 1)

English

Gent

lecture

**Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026**

Defoirdt, Tom

LA25

lecturer-in-charge

**Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026**

[International Master of Science in Health Management in Aquaculture](#)

**crdts**

3

**offering**

A

[International Master of Science in Marine Biological Resources](#)

3

A

[Master of Science in Aquaculture](#)

3

A

[Exchange Programme in Bioscience Engineering: Agricultural Sciences \(master's level\)](#)

3

A

**Teaching languages**

English

**Keywords**

Micro-organisms, communities, microbiota, microbiome, functionality, ecological selection, bio-floc technology.

**Position of the course**

The purpose of this course is to familiarize the students with the importance of the micro-organisms that are present in (the different compartments of) aquaculture systems, and how these can be managed. The students will learn that by the targeted manipulation of the microbiota in aquaculture systems, the disease risk for the cultured animals can considerably be decreased and production output can be increased.

**Contents**

### Chapter 1 Microorganisms in aquaculture systems

- 1.1 Microorganisms and microbial communities
- 1.2 Methods to study microorganisms
- 1.3 Sources of microorganisms in aquaculture systems
- 1.4 Growth of microorganisms
- 1.5 Densities of microorganisms in aquaculture systems
- 1.6 Functions of microorganisms in aquaculture systems

### Chapter 2 Removing bacteria

- 2.1 Physical inactivation
- 2.2 Disinfection
- 2.3 Antibiotics
- 2.4 Phage therapy
- 2.5 Managing the entrance of microorganisms

### Chapter 3 Adding bacteria: probiotics

- 3.1 Probiotics in aquaculture
- 3.2 Modes of action
- 3.3 Selection of probiotics
- 3.4 Registration, production, delivery
- 3.5 The black box of probiotics
- 3.6 Prebiotics

## **Chapter 4 Analysis and steering of the microbial community**

- 4.1 Aquaculture microbiomes
- 4.2 Analysis of diversity
- 4.3 Management based on diversity
- 4.4 r/K selection
- 4.5 Management based on r/K selection

## **Chapter 5 Bacterial activity management**

- 5.1 Virulence factors
- 5.2 Inhibition of virulence factor production
- 5.3 Regulation of virulence factors
- 5.4 Quorum sensing (QS)
- 5.5 Quorum sensing interference (QSI)
- 5.6 Advantages of antivirulence therapy

## **Chapter 6 Biofloc technology**

- 6.1 Waste generation in aquaculture
- 6.2 Removal of nitrogen waste
- 6.3 Manipulation of the C/N ratio
- 6.4 Aeration
- 6.5 Bioflocs as feed
- 6.6 Microbial ecology of bioflocs

### **Initial competences**

General biology, chemistry, biochemistry and basic knowledge on aquaculture.

### **Final competences**

- 1 The student is aware of the significance of the natural microbiota in aquaculture systems.
- 2 The student is able to describe and discuss the microbial compartments in aquaculture systems.
- 3 The student knows the methods that are available to study microorganisms and microbial communities.
- 4 The student is able to make funded suggestions and recommendations to improve the microbial community composition and functionality with the aim of maximizing animal health and culture performance.
- 5 The student knows the methods that can be used to manipulate the microbial community, and can approach this in both in a qualitative and quantitative way.

### **Conditions for credit contract**

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

### **Conditions for exam contract**

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

### **Teaching methods**

Seminar, Lecture

### **Extra information on the teaching methods**

Theory lectures and calculation exercises: lectures based on powerpoint presentations.

### **Study material**

Type: Slides

Name: Aquatic Microbial Community Management: lecture notes  
Indicative price: € 10  
Optional: yes  
Language : English  
Available on Ufora : Yes  
Online Available : No  
Available in the Library : No  
Available through Student Association : No

## **References**

### **Course content-related study coaching**

Study guidance upon request by email or on appointment.

### **Assessment moments**

end-of-term assessment

### **Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period**

Written assessment

### **Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period**

Written assessment

### **Examination methods in case of permanent assessment**

### **Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment**

examination during the second examination period is possible

### **Extra information on the examination methods**

Period aligned evaluation.

Theory: written closed book exam.

Calculations: written open book exam.

### **Calculation of the examination mark**

Out of 20: 13 points attributed to closed book theory exam and 7 points attributed to open book calculations exam

Students who eschew period aligned and/or non-period aligned evaluations for this course unit may be failed by the examiner.